

He draws characters and settings from people and places he knew in his cowboy years; his penitentiary days; from New Orleans, Honduras, and New York.

**B. UNITY.** O. Henry's books are collections of stories. His stories, however, have definite plots and hang together with suspense and action. Sometimes, when he was pressed for money and in poor health, he wrote a story piecemeal to get advances. This habit sometimes makes for a drawing introduction.

#### C. SYMBOLISM.

1. The cut hair and the sold watch — symbolize the gift of self and possessions that make up the gift of the magi. (*The Gift of the Magi, The Four Million*)
2. Jimmy's tool case — represents his old life, but he has to use the old life to gain final entrance to the new. (*A Retrieved Reformation, Roads of Destiny*)
3. Citizen's money lying on dresser — symbolizes how small is the importance of money compared to human feeling and shared misery. (*Makes the Whole World Kin, Sixes and Sevens*)
4. The last leaf — symbolizes the old man's life. Dying in painting his masterpiece, he, too, is the last leaf. (*The Last Leaf, The Trimmed Lamp*)

**D. APPEAL TO THE SENSES.** O. Henry appeals to all the senses.

1. Sight. "So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters." (*The Gift of the Magi, The Four Million*) "An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall." (*The Last Leaf, The Trimmed Lamp*)
2. Hearing. "... life is made up of sobs, sniffles and smiles, with sniffles predominating." (*The Gift of the Magi, The Four Million*) "He had on ... a pair of the stiff squeaky shoes that the state furnishes to its discharged compulsory guests." (*A Retrieved Reformation, Roads of Destiny*) "Burglars of the third type do not hiss." (*Makes the Whole World Kin, Sixes and Sevens*)
3. Touch. "And if I pass a theater where there's an 'East Lynne' matinee going on, the moisture starts my left arm jumping like a toothache." ("East Lynne" was very sad and people always cried.) (*Makes the Whole World Kin, Ibid.*) "... a cold, unseen stranger whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers." (*The Last Leaf, The Trimmed Lamp*)
4. Smell. "Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries ..." (*The Last Leaf, Ibid.*) "The enveloping scent of mignonette, the odor that she had loved and made her own — whence came it?" (*The Furnished Room, The Four Million*)
5. Taste. "It seems to me I'd swap my pony and saddle for a stack of buttered brown pancakes with some first crop, open kettle, New Orleans sweetening." (*The Pimienta Pancakes, Heart of the West*)

#### E. STYLE.

1. Rhetoric. O. Henry liked to play with words. "The broker's hour is not only crowded, but the minutes and seconds are hanging to all the straps and packing both front and rear platforms." (*The Romance of a Busy Broker from The Four Million*). He often used alliteration. "Tune the pipes to the tragedy of tallow, the bane of bulk, the calamity of corpulence." (*The Skylight Room, Ibid.*)
2. Humor. His humor consists of exaggeration: "Faithful? Well, he was on hand when Mary would have had to hire a dozen subpoena servers to find her lamb." (*The Trimmed Lamp, The Trimmed Lamp*) incongruous comparisons: "... the sausage, with his drapery wrapped about him, barely lingered in a pleasant thanatopsis with the buckwheats and the sweet but doomed maple." (*Springtime A La Carte, The Four Million*)

**malapropisms:** "General De Vega, as was the name by which he denounced himself ..." "So regular, the steamers travelled to the United States to seduce labour." "Ye get similar to the lettuce-eaters ..." (*The Shamrock and the Palm, Cabbages and Kings*) **misquotations:** "... earth has no sorrow that dough cannot heal ..." (*The Discounters of Money, Roads of Destiny*)

**irreverence:** "I was feeling like Adam before the apple stampede ..." (*The Pimienta Pancakes, Heart of the West*)

**inflated circumlocution:** "In vain beats the faithfulest heart above a 52-inch belt. Avaunt, Hoover! Hoover, forty-five, flush and foolish, might carry off Helen himself; Hoover, forty-five, flush, foolish and fat is meat for perdition." (*The Skylight Room, The Four Million*)

**pun:** "... the pointer I got from that setter ..." (*Memories of a Yellow Dog, Ibid.*)

3. **Construction.** O. Henry is known for the trick ending. He uses coincidence and invents fantastic plots. Often he breaks into the story in chatty style.

4. **Mood.** O. Henry's mood changes with different stories, but he is almost always cheerful. He has been accused of sentimentality, but perhaps he chose to see life that way.

5. **Point of View.** Many stories are told from an omniscient viewpoint. Another favorite is first person. The author frequently interposes himself as speaker.

6. **Vocabulary.** O. Henry knew much of the dictionary. He often uses unfamiliar words as: *persiflage, peripatetic, fugacious, obmutescence, eleemosynary*, and so on.

7. **Timeliness of his work.** The reader will be impressed with how much more money would buy in the 1900-1910 period. Some of the references are to current events and New York attractions of that day. However, the wit and humor remain modern.

8. **Figures of Speech.**

Device	Example
<b>Simile</b>	"Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail." ( <i>The Gift of the Magi, Ibid.</i> )
<b>Personification</b>	"... hairpins — those discreet, indistinguishable friends of womankind, feminine of gender, infinite of mood and uncommunicative of tense." ( <i>The Furnished Room, Ibid.</i> ) "... my thoughts milling some as I tried to run 'em into the corral." ( <i>The Pimienta Pancakes, Heart of the West</i> )
<b>Metaphor</b>	"He stopped and let loose the practiced scalpel of his tongue ..." ( <i>The Skylight Room, The Four Million</i> )
<b>Allusion</b>	"As Caesar had his Brutus, every bed of charity must have its toll of a bath ..." ( <i>The Cop and the Anthem, Ibid.</i> )
<b>Metonymy</b>	"A brown pompadour ten feet away had been using her eyes and ears." ( <i>The Trimmed Lamp, The Trimmed Lamp</i> )
<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	"... a stair carpet ... vegetable ... lush lichen or spreading moss that grew in patches to the stair-case and was viscid under the foot like organic matter." ( <i>The Furnished Room, The Four Million</i> )
<b>Hyperbole</b>	"If all the snakes I've used the oil of was strung out in a row they'd reach eight times as far as Saturn ..." ( <i>Makes the Whole World Kin, Sixes and Sevens</i> )
<b>Oxymoron</b>	"... her face like glorified melancholy ..." ( <i>Dicky, Cabbages and Kings</i> )

#### V. QUOTABLE O. HENRY

"... the twist of lemon peel on the cocktail of creation — such is the bride."

—*Sisters of the Golden Circle*  
The Four Million

"The mountains reached up their bulky shoulders to receive the level gallop of Apollo's homing steeds, the day died in the lagoons and in the shadowed banana groves and in the mangrove swamps, where the great blue crabs were beginning to crawl to land for their nightly ramble. And it died, at last, upon the highest peaks. Then the brief twilight, ephemeral as the flight of a moth, came and went; the Southern Cross peeped with its topmost eye above a row of palms, and the fire-flies heralded with their torches the approach of soft-footed night."

—*Smith*  
Cabbages and Kings

"Clocks are shackles on the feet of mankind."

—*The Caliph, Cupid and the Clock*  
The Four Million

"A good story is like a bitter pill with the sugar coating inside of it."

—*The Graft*  
Cabbages and Kings

"... for each one fancies that his romance has its own tutelary guardian and divinity."

—*The Badge of Policeman O'Roon*  
The Trimmed Lamp

"The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey."

—*The Last Leaf*  
Ibid.

"The mark of the beast is not indelible upon a man until he goes about with a stubble."

—*A Municipal Report*  
Strictly Business

"I fancy that when God began to create the earth on the first Monday morning one could have leaned out one's window and heard the drops of mud splashing from His trowel as He built up the everlasting hills."

—*A Municipal Report*  
Ibid.

"The soul of the real artist is quenched with difficulty."

—*Compliments of the Season*  
Ibid.